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ART. XIV.—*New Ideas on Population, with Remarks on the Theories of Malthus and Godwin, by Alexander H. Everett, Chargé d' Affaires of the United States of America at the Court of the Netherlands.* 8vo. London printed, Boston reprinted.

We cannot better introduce this essay to the notice of our readers, than by an extract from the preface :

‘ The following tract was prepared for publication, upon the continent, last winter. A perusal of the essay of Mr Malthus on population, and some conversations, which I held at the time with a friend upon the subject of it, suggested to me certain views, which I thought new, and which are quite at variance, with the conclusions of that eminent philosopher. Without feeling any extraordinary confidence in my own ideas, especially where they differ from those of an author of great and just celebrity, whose theories have been sanctioned by the favorable opinion of many competent judges, I have nevertheless concluded to submit these views to the public. \* \* \* \* \*. Upon my arrival in London a few weeks since, for the purpose of superintending the impression of the work, I took an opportunity of mentioning the subject to my illustrious friend, Sir James Mackintosh, and of explaining to him the general scope of the argument. This great statesman and philosopher, whose name I feel it a high honor to be able to mention in connexion with my own, upon learning that the Essay, which I had prepared, was intended in part to correct the theory of Mr Malthus, kindly invited me to go down with him to the East India College, and converse with that gentleman on the subject. I accepted this proposal with much pleasure, as well from a natural desire to make the acquaintance of so eminent a writer, as from the reflection, that if I had accidentally taken up any misconception of his views, I should probably be able to rectify it by a free communication with him, upon the points in controversy. Had I found this to be the case, I was fully prepared to sacrifice my own ideas and to suppress the work.

‘ I had always been highly gratified with the candid and temperate tone, that distinguishes the writings of Mr Malthus, although I have not been so fortunate as to agree with him in his leading principles ;—and I hope that I shall not be thought to pass the bounds of delicacy in adding, that I found his conversation the perfect counterpart of his works. I have rarely met with a finer specimen of the true philosophic temper, graced and set off by the urbanity of a finished gentleman, than is seen in his per-

son. I feel myself greatly indebted to him for the very hospitable reception, which he was pleased to give me, and for the kindness and courtesy, with which he entered into all the explanations that I requested in regard to his opinions. I should pay him a very poor compliment, if I were to suppose it possible, that he could be offended by a free expression of opinions different from his own: and I trust that there is nothing in the tone and manner of the following tract, that will tend in the slightest degree to wound his feelings. \* \* \* \* \*. It would be an unbecoming violation of the confidence of private intercourse to detail particularly the conversations, which I held with Mr Malthus on the subject of this essay: and it would also be useless for the present purpose, as very little if any thing was said on his part, that is not contained in his printed work, or on mine, that will not be found in the following tract. After a full and free discussion of all the points in dispute, I was satisfied that the difference of opinion between us did not arise from any misunderstanding on either side, but from a difference in our modes of considering the subject, resulting perhaps originally from accident, but confirmed by habit and not to be affected by a few conversations. I had therefore no reason to change my intention of publishing the present work.

‘It was suggested to me by Mr Malthus, that the leading principle maintained in it is the same in substance with that of a work on Population by Mr S. Gray. I had never read the work of Mr Gray, and have not had an opportunity of consulting it since, for the purpose of comparing his ideas with mine. Should they be in fact the same, my views, though original, would not be entitled to the name I have given them of *new ideas*. Even in this case, however, as the work of Mr Gray does not seem to have made much impression upon public opinion, a republication of the same views, by a different hand, in a new form, might not be without its use. But I am inclined to think, from a hasty reference to some passages of his book at the house of Mr Malthus, and from the observations of that gentleman upon his principles, that he has not anticipated the theory of the present essay, in its most essential points.’

Not having ourselves had an opportunity of seeing the work of Mr S. Gray, we are unable to give an opinion, how far he has anticipated Mr Everett in the present case. But we find in the *New Monthly Magazine* for 1821, Vol. I. p. 195, an essay on the theories of Godwin and Malthus, where some of the leading points of Mr Everett's view of the subject are clearly stated. We perceive, however, from a comparison of

his work with the essay in the magazine, that the coincidence is purely accidental, and affording therefore a strong presumption of the accuracy of the opinions, which have thus suggested themselves without communication to several independent thinkers and writers. We beg leave also to add that the same well written essay in the magazine, has cost us the pains of remoulding the observations, which we had prepared to offer our readers, on the subject of Mr Everett's work, part of which we found to have been anticipated, and part to require to be fortified against opposite statements by the ingenious writer of that article.

The very important subject of Population became matter of controversy, in the following manner, which we cannot better state than in the words of the writer in the *New Monthly Magazine*.

‘Mr Malthus informs the public, in the preface to his *Essay on Population*, that that work was first suggested “by a paper in Mr Godwin’s *Political Inquirer*.” The paper to which Mr Malthus refers is, we believe, that entitled “of riches and poverty,” in which Mr Godwin indulges in some speculations upon the accession of happiness, that would result to the human race, from an equal distribution of leisure and labor, or (which he regards as the same thing) of riches and poverty.

‘For the purpose of showing, among other matters, that these speculations upon political systems, founded on the principle of equal property, were utterly vain, and that no society in which they were attempted to be realized could last a single generation, Mr Malthus was induced to write his “*Essay on Population*.” The object of that work is to prove that there is a law of human nature, which Mr Malthus calls the principle of population, by which man multiplies his kind more rapidly than his subsistence; a law, to use Mr Malthus’ own words, “by force of which, man has a tendency to increase in a geometrical progression, whereas his subsistence can only be increased in a concurrent arithmetical progression.”’

It was by this course of argument, that Mr Malthus met the suggestions of Godwin, in favor of extravagant schemes of political reform. In the language of Mr Everett, ‘it is in fact somewhat singular, that while the immediate object of Godwin was to demonstrate the expediency of practical reform, and that of Mr Malthus to prove its inutility, the theories of both these writers admit on general grounds, of precisely the

same answer. While Godwin considers political institutions as absolutely mischievous, Malthus affirms that they are completely indifferent. The true answer to both is, that they are neither mischievous nor indifferent, but extremely valuable : that the origin of evil is not to be found in the existence of society, nor in any supposed law of nature, which creates a necessity of perpetual famine, but in the primary constitution of the universe.'

The work of Malthus on Population is certainly the production of a very powerful mind, furnished with all the information which books can afford, and possessed of the additional light to be derived from personal observation in foreign countries. In those chapters devoted to the consideration of the subject of 'the checks of population' in the principal countries of the earth, a mass of important facts is very ably condensed into a small compass. The subsequent portion of the work, principally on the condition of the poor, is replete with views equally correct and ingenious, and suggestions of the last practical importance, though mingled also, as we conceive, with grave errors. We cannot but regard it as a very singular circumstance that a work so important and valuable, the production of a very ingenious mind acting on materials collected with great diligence and matured with great deliberation, should start with a proposition in itself paradoxical, and, if not perfectly idle and nugatory, contradicted by the whole tenor of the work which it introduces. Such we esteem the proposition that 'Population tends to increase geometrically and food arithmetically, and that of course the former is always pressing on the latter.' We, in the first place, apprehend that this proposition conveys no very distinct ideas to the mind of any reader. The scientific terms in which it is conveyed, in an unavailing attempt to impart mathematical accuracy to moral topics, really add nothing to the clearness of the reader's ideas; and, if we do not deceive ourselves, either mean nothing, or mean what is manifestly false and impossible. To say that population increases geometrically and that food increases arithmetically, is of itself to say nothing. To give the proposition its significance, it is necessary to add, that if the population and food be compared with each other *at certain fixed intervals*, it will be found that they have a tendency, the one to a geometrical and the other to an arithmetical progression, con-

temporaneously. It would of course be very possible that the population should increase geometrically, but slower than any assigned rate, and food arithmetically faster than any assigned rate.

But if Mr Malthus' theorem intend, as there is no doubt it does, that at the same stages of the progression, population increases geometrically and arithmetically; that is, for instance, that population may double every twenty-five years, and increase as 2, 4, 8, 16, while food will increase only as 2, 4, 6, 8, so that at the end of the fourth period of twenty-five years, there will be eight times as many people, with only four times as much food, then it needs only be said, that the thing is manifestly impossible. To suppose it, would be to suppose that half the food feeds twice the number of mouths, and to contradict the principles, which Mr Malthus has himself many times repeated, that the population cannot advance beyond the food.—Mr Malthus has in many parts of his work and in several connexions urged that the food must precede the population, and this by natural, invincible necessity. He has made this the real basis of some of the most valuable parts of his treatise. How then can it be said that population increases geometrically and food arithmetically in equal periods, when it is essential to the increase of population that the increase of food should go before it? If it be true that every man lives by eating, can any thing be plainer than that the food must increase as fast as the population?

But Mr Malthus may reply, that he speaks only of tendency;—that population *tends* to a geometrical increase and food to an arithmetical. This language, however, savors to us of an unprofitable abstraction, and its ambiguity is justly criticised by the writer in the *New Monthly Magazine*. *To tend* can express nothing but the natural constitution, the primary law, which God has given for the regulation of the increase of man. If it is one law of our nature that food must support life, and that population can increase no faster than food increases to nourish it, it is surely idle to say that population tends to increase faster than food. It is equivalent to saying, that if men could live without eating, they would multiply more rapidly, than while their numbers are limited to the supply of food. That man can increase no faster than his food, is not only true in itself, but is asserted in numerous

places of Mr Malthus' work, as a law of our nature. That he should have overlooked it, while urging his famous mathematical proposition, is the more astonishing, when we consider the circumstances on which the increase of food depends. Food requires land to grow on; land is limited, and cannot increase; therefore Mr Malthus gives food only an arithmetical rate of progress. But how aptly might one object to his distinction between a tendency to a geometrical progression and an actual geometrical increase in the case of population; that food also *tends* to a geometrical increase and by a much more rapidly advancing series. It is true, Mr Malthus objects, that, as the quantity of land in every country, as well as in the whole earth, is limited, cultivation would, after a while, occupy it all, and after this period all increase of food must result from laborious improvements in the processes of industry on the same spots, and therefore be arithmetical. But it might be retorted with equal force, that population only *tends* to a geometrical increase, and can actually advance no faster than food. If food is checked by the geographical boundaries within which it is raised, population is also checked by food. As to fact, then, population is no more rapid in its progress than food; as to tendency, in many respects far less so.

But it is time to drop this ill applied term, which has perplexed, more or less, almost every part of Mr Malthus' inquiry. Though when words are explained, there is no objection to speaking of the *tendency* of food to increase, yet it is plain that there is no accuracy in the expression, and that it ought not to find entrance into a proposition so exact, as to be couched in mathematical language. Food as such, whether animal or vegetable, has no tendency to increase at all. Animals, indeed, in their free state, may increase in the geometrical progression, and in much more rapidly returning periods than man; and the grains and other vegetables which make up his food increase infinitesimally faster, in the natural law of their multiplication, than the lord of creation. But neither animals nor vegetables, as subjected to man and cultivated by him, can be said to tend of themselves to increase. They require to be preserved, husbanded, reared, and multiplied, by human care. Vegetable food—grains and roots—ripen and are gathered into barns. Here they have no tendency but to speedy dissolution. Before they can increase as food, man

must separate a portion to be planted for a new harvest. How fast, as food, they will multiply, depends, therefore, altogether on the quantity which man chooses to plant from year to year, and the pains and skill he may bestow on the culture of it. So of animal food. Animals, in subjection to man, become a part of his food. How rapidly the amount of this food will increase depends upon the number of the young of their various races—calves, lambs, pigs, &c. which the owners will save from the shambles, and rear for the increase of the stock. The fishes of the sea are a part of our food. Their natural increase is almost infinite; but their amount as food for man increases only with the pains, care, and numbers of persons devoted to taking them. The result of the whole then is, that the preparation of food, which Mr Malthus has spoken of as a thing which increases by a law of its own, is an affair purely of man's agency.

Hence, therefore, the fallacy of the different ratios of increase of man and his food. Food is produced by human agency, availing itself, it is true, of the principles of natural growth, and limited within certain bounds. Man cannot grind flour out of stones, nor pasture cattle on the sea. But what food he does gather and consume, is the voluntary product of his own industry. This teaches us at once to suspect the proposition that population advances by a more rapid increase than food. All men must eat, all wish to eat, all will die if they do not eat; and the food by which all are supported must be the product of their labor. There is really, therefore, no reason to anticipate or admit any difference of the ratios by which food and population increase. But since the production of food is a voluntary act of man, it is plain that nothing fixed and uniform can be predicated of it; and the quantity which he will produce will depend on his various ability or disposition. It will be affected by the abundance or scarcity of land, by the security of property, by the manners prevailing in the country, by the stage of civilization of the people in question. In general, it may be assumed that no more food, as such, will be produced than is needed to support the population. Much more grain indeed may, and in many countries is grown, than is consumed; but the surplus being exported may be regarded, in this connexion, as any other manufacture. After the demands of foreign commerce are supplied,



no more food will be produced than is needed for consumption. Generally we may go further, and say that not so much is produced as is wanted for the whole population, and we imagine it is this point which has led Mr Malthus into the idea of his twofold ratio. In a cultivated society, where a great division of labor exists, a small part of the community fulfils the office of preparing food for the whole, and the greater portion of the inhabitants procure it by exchanging something for it, labor or other equivalents. Now the poor, from unthriftiness, indolence, and vice, will often incapacitate themselves from procuring their share by this exchange; and the rich will, by waste and by possessing the means of purchasing for luxury, consume more than their share; and thus the supply will prove inadequate to the wants of all the eaters. Hence the population may always exceed the actual level of the food, more or less in different countries, but in some degree in all;—not because population and food advance in different ratios, but because those who stand at the bottom of the scale will suffer, when by any accident, or by the general causes at which we have hinted, an equal distribution is not effected. The remarks of Mr Everett on this general point are so satisfactory, that we should do our readers an injustice not to break off our own and transcribe his.

‘The economical effect of an increase of population is an augmentation in the supply of labor and in the demand for its products. The wants of the new comers create the new demand, and their labor furnishes the new supply. These principles are too obvious to require any development; yet Mr Malthus seems either not to have perceived them, or not to have kept them distinctly in view. He appears throughout his work to consider the increase of population simply in its effect upon the consumption of the means of subsistence, without regarding its operation upon their supply. He views every individual added to society as an additional consumer, without appearing to reflect that he is also at the same time an additional laborer. This consideration alone, if properly estimated, is sufficient, I think, to rectify the whole theory of this writer, and to refute its paradoxical and dangerous parts.

‘The circumstances that determine the productiveness of labor are necessarily two, the natural advantages under which it is applied, and the skill employed in its application. The same quantity of labor will produce a hundred bushels of corn in Mexico, and only ten in Norway; nor could any effort of industry obtain

the delicious wines of France and Italy from the soil of Great Britain. The effect of a difference in skill is equally remarkable. A single miller will grind more corn in a day than twenty men would be able to pound up into powder by hand; and a single weaver will weave more cloth in an equal time, than a dozen persons who labor without a machine. These illustrations obviously afford a very moderate representation of the differences in the productiveness of labor resulting from the varieties of natural advantages, and of skill under which it is directed. For the present purpose the advantages of nature as well as the labor of individuals may be considered as uniform; since the increase of population can have no immediate effect in altering the soil, climate, or other natural properties of the country in which it occurs. Of the several causes that determine the amount of the means of subsistence which will be obtained by the labor of a given number of individuals, the only one therefore which must be regarded as variable for the purposes of this inquiry, is the skill with which their labor is applied. Hence the question whether an increase of population tends to produce an abundance or a scarcity of the means of subsistence, resolves itself into the further one, whether such increase produces a favorable or an unfavorable effect upon the skill employed in the application of labor.

‘The question being thus reduced to its proper terms, few intelligent persons, I apprehend, will hesitate much, about the manner in which it should be answered. It is sufficiently notorious that an increase of population on a given territory is followed immediately by a division of labor; which produces in its turn the invention of new machines, an improvement of methods in all the departments of industry, and a rapid progress in the various branches of art and science. The increase effected by these improvements in the productiveness of labor is obviously much greater in proportion, than the increase of the population to which it is owing. The population of Great Britain, for example, doubled itself in the course of the last century, while the improvements in the modes of applying labor made during the same period have increased its productiveness so much, that it would probably be a moderate estimate to consider its products as a thousand times greater than before. If however we suppose the increase in the products of labor naturally resulting from the doubling of the population on a given territory, to be only in the proportion of ten to one, the means of subsistence will still be more abundant in the proportion of five to one than they were before. And on this very low calculation, the respective rates of increase in the amount of population and the means of subsistence comparatively stated, will be as follows :

to wit, for the population 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, &c. and for the means of subsistence 1, 10, 100, 1000, &c. This statement of ratios is more comfortable and, I believe, far more correct than that of Mr Malthus. But this estimate, though moderate, is still much higher than it need be in order to refute the system of this writer. It is only necessary for this purpose to suppose that the increase in the products of labor exactly keeps pace with the increase in population : as, for example, that the additional supply of laborers together with the improvement of methods and invention of machines, resulting from the doubling of a population on a given territory, only maintains the productiveness of labor at the same point at which it stood before, and consequently doubles its products. Even upon this estimate, however much below the truth, the supply of the means of subsistence remains the same, notwithstanding the increase of consumers. In order to substantiate the theories of Mr Malthus, it is necessary to adopt the strange supposition, that labor becomes less efficient and productive in proportion to the degree of skill with which it is applied ; that a man can raise more weight by hand, than by the help of a lever, and see further with the naked eye, than with the best telescope. pp. 12—15.

It will be perceived that these views leave ample room to account for all the suffering for want of food which there is in the world ; or rather they furnish the only sound explanation of this distress, by referring it to the neglect, misfortunes, or vices of the sufferers. It is also to be borne in mind, that although the production of food, as the act of man, must advance with every thing which increases the amount of human agency in the world, yet the individual being is brought into existence by the interposition of others, and is unable for some years to prepare his own food. We accordingly find that it is in infancy that the greatest mortality happens, that age suffering which is not only most tender, but which is also wholly dependent on others for the supply of food. This demands to be taken into consideration, in stating the general proposition, that food is the production of man, since there is nevertheless one period of man's life, in which he is incompetent to produce it. It is true this is counterbalanced by the strong affection, which leads parents to provide for their children's nourishment. But since some children come into the world under circumstances which deprive them of parental support, it is reasonable to expect some inequality in the amount of that food which all need, and of that population of which a part only (though infin-

itely the greater part) is able to prepare or acquire food. This deduction however cannot amount to any difference in the ratios of increase. And as human labor and skill are the great element in the increase of food, it is, upon the whole, plain, that food must increase with the numbers of those who need it, and who are able to raise it.

Hence in point of fact they are both advancing in the same ratio in all countries, where either of them is advancing. Where food is on the decline, population must decline also. Where population advances permanently, by however slow an increase, there food must advance by the same ratio ; unless we suppose that the people are every day more and more wretchedly fed, which is an absurdity on the supposition of a permanently increasing population. Where the population is stationary, food, for the same reason, will also be stationary. And since every population must be either advancing, declining, or stationary, and food in all these states must keep even pace with it, we cannot perceive how the idea of different ratios between them can stand for a moment.

The difficulty which most needs solution in this controversy is that, which arises from the inquiry into the ultimate consequences of an indefinite increase of population on the earth, while the supply of food must be limited. Mr Malthus has urged that the effect of such an increase would be a fatal overstocking of the earth and consequent famine, distress, struggle for the food which would not be adequate for the wants of all, and thus a general disorganization of society. This effect is by Mr Godwin merely put at an indefinite distance. By the Marquis Condorcet, even in the midst of splendid visions of human perfectibility, such an event is considered unavoidable, and he speaks of the periodical destruction and renovation of our race as a part of its natural economy. Of all these ways of considering the subject, we must confess that Godwin's, though mixed with strange errors, is nearest the truth. Godwin places the evil itself at an indefinite distance. Had he placed it at an infinite distance, that is, had he said it could never occur in the constitution of our race, we think he would have spoken the truth. Godwin also urged that vicious political institutions obstruct the progress of man towards an indefinite improvement of his condition. This, in general, is also true. The error of Godwin was in the specification of his instances. Led away by the passion of the

times, he numbered among the abuses which thus obstruct the improvement of man all political and social institutions. To this Mr Malthus replies, that it is not political institutions, which prevent the indefinite increase of man, but the constitutional law of our nature, which makes population increase so much faster than food, that the former is always kept down by the latter, and that this pressure, so far from being delayed till the earth shall be cultivated to its last inch, is felt every day and hour. From these premises Mr Malthus would infer, that reform is not to be attempted in vicious political institutions, since not they, but the primitive laws of our nature, produce the pressure on the population.

Now to this mode of meeting Godwin's visions of reform every philosophical inquirer must object. It would have been far more judicious to examine particularly the alleged abuses in society, to which Mr Godwin traces its sufferings, and to show them either to be no abuses, or abuses inseparable from our nature. Thus Mr Godwin particularly insists that marriage, and the English laws of property, are pernicious abuses. How easy would it have been for Mr Malthus to meet him at large on the first point. Instead of this, he has only alluded to the subject in a few paragraphs. As to the English laws of transmitting property, Godwin is unquestionably justified in calling them an abuse. Till the vast accumulation of personal wealth rendered their provisions in some degree nugatory, it was an abuse of the most active and operative kind, and to no one cause is the modern growth of England more to be ascribed than to the equal distribution of personal goods. In this instance therefore Godwin justly attributed a part of the suffering of the common people to the odious laws which take so great a proportion of the land of England out of the market; and Mr Malthus, instead of setting up against him the fantastical defence of his different ratios and alleging that they would sooner or later produce the same evils, should either have shown that these laws are not, or have confessed that they were, productive of evil.

It is the more to be wondered at that Mr Malthus did not avowedly take this course with Mr Godwin, since he has unconsciously fallen into it, in nearly one half of his work. All that part which treats of the checks of population in different countries, is in reality an amplification of Godwin's idea that

the increase of man is kept down by false political institutions. From the savages of New Zealand up to the civilized nations of Europe, there is not one country, in which Mr Malthus might not find a part of the checks on population in human institutions. It is with a somewhat perverse ingenuity, however, that he identifies their operation with that of his great mathematical check ; and tells us that, though moral restraint, vice, and misery are the immediate checks, they all grow out of the tendency of population to outrun food ; and that however bad the government is, the population is always somewhat greater than the actual means of subsistence. But to infer from this, that *therefore* it is in vain to reform institutions because, however scanty the population, it is still beyond the food ; and that it is in vain to multiply the food, because, however abundant, the population will still outrun it, besides being inconclusive, is, in our judgment, a very dangerous argument. It is inconclusive, for it may be (nay it certainly will be) that the reform of vicious institutions will at one and the same moment give a spring both to population and to food, and not only more people will be fed, but they will be better fed ; and whereas in a savage or despotic country all are pinched, in a free and prosperous country a few only starve, and the majority are at ease. But Mr Malthus' reasoning is not only inconclusive, but it is of the nature of an estoppel, against all reforms, all improvements. He urges with the most solemn and eloquent earnestness, that our nature is so constituted that population must outrun food, and that the more perfect the theoretical constitution of society, the more rapidly and more certainly it tends to a disproportion between population and food. Now by what argument—on these principles—can the most atrocious despotism, the most hideous tyranny, whether of mobs or monarchs, be reformed ? What is to hinder the monarchs or the mobs from saying, ' Not our sway, but your own nature, dooms you to famine Till the soil to the last rood ; you will multiply faster than your means of support ; starve you must, whether we rule or abdicate.' To such a defence of despotism, we see not how Mr Malthus could reply. An inference so dangerous to human happiness must lead us to question the hypothesis on which it rests, viz. that man, by a law of his nature, tends thus fatally to overstock the earth. We deny any such tendency, and are happy in having Mr Malthus, though ostensibly an

opponent, yet really a patron of our opinion. Mr Malthus maintains that this overstocking is prevented by another necessary law of our nature, namely, the difference of the two ratios. How then can man be said to tend naturally to a catastrophe, to which he is prevented from arriving by the organic laws of his nature? We differ only as to the law which prevents this increase; and we seek it in the intention in which man was formed, by Providence. The earth on which we are placed is limited; our race tends not to infinite but to indefinite increase. It is plain, then, that the Being, who created us, either designed expressly that we should multiply and literally fill the earth, in order then to starve by myriads, or that he has so constituted us, that the principle of increase, though indefinitely advancing, will never overstock the earth, though limited in its extent. If we are still asked what these causes are, we answer, all those circumstances, in our constitution and fortunes here on earth, which check increase; some of them arising immediately from the virtues and some from the vices of man, some resting on the dictates of prudence, some on the law of necessity, some growing out of the constitution of our frames, some from the organization of society, some resulting from the great catastrophes in the physical world, and some purely of a moral quality. Man is prevented from overstocking the earth, in the same way that he is prevented from living, in the individual case, to be a thousand years old. We believe it would be very difficult to give a more distinct reason for one than for the other. Three score years and ten are considered a kind of term to human existence, but well authenticated instances exist of persons who have attained to more than twice that period in modern times, and no particular reason can be given why man should not live five hundred or a thousand years, nay, as Condorcet thought he might, forever. This would, of course, tend to the overstocking of the earth much sooner than that event could take place, in the common order of mortality. Yet Mr Malthus cannot ascribe it to the difference of his ratios of food and population, that no man lives to be five hundred or a thousand years old; and his theory, potent as its principle is, gives no account why those, who have food in abundance and the means of increasing it as they wish, do not live on from age to age, and never die. We hold it therefore far more simple, far more philosophical,

to account for the earth's not being overstocked, first as a law of our nature that it should not be, and then by the whole complex action of the principles, by which what we are, in every other respect, is also determined. That generations pass away and others come on ; and that the successive races thus make room for each other, instead of accumulating into a crowd beyond the power of the earth to feed, we hold to be brought about in the same way, that the death of each individual man is brought about.

But Mr Malthus may say that this view of the subject involves the inconsistency of supposing that so great a calamity as the overstocking of the earth is prevented from occurring by various vices and imperfections of our nature, against which, nevertheless, we seek for remedies as evils in the individual instance ; thus striving to remove those vices and imperfections, whose combined agency discharges so salutary a function in the human system. This observation, if correct, would form no objection to our view of the subject ; or if it did, the objection would apply still more pointedly to the theory of Mr Malthus himself. The overstocking of the world, or any part of it, would be an evil, and this evil, say we, is prevented from occurring by various restraints, imperfections, and evils in our nature, against which—though collectively their operation is salutary—we all struggle and seek for remedies. Mr Malthus, on this point, differs from us only in saying that the acknowledged calamity of an overstocked world is prevented from occurring by the actual starvation, which constantly presses upon population, and presses with increasing force as population increases. And yet starvation surely is an evil—though discharging this salutary office—against which all men must struggle ; a bitter cup necessary to be swallowed, but which each would fain have pass from himself.

Mr Malthus repeatedly observes that the simplicity and neatness of the proposition, whereby he accounts for the fact that population is kept within bounds, from a presumption of its truth. There are cases indeed when we all feel the truth of Boerhaave's motto *simplex sigillum veritatis*, but it is not often that great questions in human condition and destination are to be so easily disposed of. 'It is a perfectly just observation of Mr Godwin,' says Mr Malthus, 'that "there is a principle in human society, by which population is perpetually kept down to the



level of the means of subsistence." The sole question is, what is this principle? Is it some obscure and occult cause? Is it some mysterious interference of heaven, which at a certain period strikes the men with impotence and the women with barrenness? Or is it a cause open to our researches, within our view; a cause which has constantly been observed to operate though with varied force, in every state, in which man has been placed? Is it not misery and the fear of misery, the necessary and inevitable results of the laws of nature, which human institutions, so far from aggravating have tended considerably to mitigate, though they can never remove?"\* We confess ourselves neither convinced by this reasoning nor gratified by the result. No one denies that the state in which human population is found 'is the result of the laws of our nature.' But the question is whether a difference of the ratios, in which food and population increase, is one of those laws? Misery and the fear of misery are certainly *among* the checks of population; but that, in general, human institutions, so far from aggravating, have tended to mitigate this misery, is a language, which we hear with astonishment from a profound philosopher. We had supposed that whether 'institutions' relieve or aggravate misery, depends on the nature of the institutions. The institutions of representative government, of free schools, of saving banks, and of religious instruction, we believe have a great tendency to mitigate human misery. We consider the institution of the holy inquisition, of despotic government, and of the law of primogeniture, as equally calculated to promote human misery; and for one being, who has suffered in a free, well governed state, from the arithmetical ratio of increase in food, we believe thousands have laid down their lives on the dark altars of political and religious oppression.

Moreover where men die for want of food, it is very rarely because it was in itself deficient. How can it be pretended that there is any lack of food in Egypt, for instance, one of the granaries of Rome, and now one of the countries in the world the poorest fed? There is no real deficiency of food where there is a rood of ground and a human arm to till it; and the government, or the laws, which prevent all who are willing to acquire food from doing so, are guilty of plunder as directly, as if they burst the granary of the rich merchant and

\* Essay on Population, Vol. II, p. 110.

rified it of its contents. There is no deficiency of food in the most crowded country on earth, whether it contain or do not contain land enough for the subsistence of its population. Were the restrictions on commerce done away, for example, in England, the flour of the Genesee country would obstruct the wharfs at Liverpool, and that of the Crimea would enter into competition with it there. It is true this would reduce the rents of the landholders. They would lose the profits they now make from inferior soils, out of the hunger of their countrymen, and a great transfer of capital to other branches of industry and to other countries would take place. With it would take place a transfer of the arts of civilized life to the fertile but barbarous quarters of the earth; and instead of an act of parliament imposing a heavy fine on a weaver who, unwilling to starve at home, is desirous of emigrating, governments might find it for their interest, and subjects for their happiness, to have a free right of emigration established.

But here again Mr Malthus' importunate argument emigrates with them. By virtue of the difference of his two ratios, want would spring out of the bosom of this wide-spread plenty, and though the freedom of commerce should afford an indefinite supply of food, it would lead only to the still more rapid multiplication of starving millions. In addition to what we have already urged in reply to this argument, and to show that by the constitution of our nature, the race of man is restrained from this disastrous increase, we may appeal to what is every day observed in society, as to the effect of plenty to produce an extraordinary increase of population. If it were true, as is very many times asserted by Mr Malthus, that great plenty leads to still greater increase and consequent suffering for food in the midst of this plenty, in what way is the difference to be accounted for between the higher and lower classes of society in respect to their relative tendency to increase? In most of the countries of Europe, two classes exist in the community, one possessed of great wealth, the other poor. Whence is it that among the first, who know not what want means but by the spectacle of it exhibited in the class beneath them, who have enough and to spare while famine pinches the land, whose board is amply spread while consuming drought parches the cornfield of the cottager, whence is it that, in this favored class, population is notoriously so much less active than in that class, on

which hard seasons deal their severity, which depends on the chance of the elements for its sustenance, and which starves if the crop fail? Whence is it that children are, in this country, the poor man's blessing, in Europe the poor man's curse; in all countries found to be fewer, almost in proportion to the abundance of the means of their support? We apprehend that this unquestioned fact is to be explained, by what Mr Malthus will perhaps reject as 'a mysterious and occult cause;' certainly on the operation of principles which he has not drawn into his account. The truth is that man is not, like the beasts that perish, a mere animal, to propagate upon food like the flocks and herds. It is only when sunk by the vicious institutions of society to the situation of a mere animal, that he puts on the conditions of brutal nature, and that his increase is measured by the corn that is dealt out to him. In proportion as his intellectual and moral nature—his only true nature—is cultivated and called out; he becomes, we will not say something different from an animal, but he certainly becomes something besides an animal. He awakens to an existence, which corn does not feed, and which famine does not starve. A moral and spiritual life grows up within him with its own principles of growth, of nourishment, and decline. In proportion to this growth of another life, to the delicacy, to the elevation, to the purity of the new existence, which the son of heaven has put on, will be the influence of the remaining mere animal nature, and the degree to which it will govern and determine his progress. Where this intellectual and moral being exists in all its abstraction and purity, it weakens the application of the passions of a grosser nature. The difficult spirit, in quest of a companion of kindred qualities, dwelling perhaps in visionary meditation on the images created by fancy, passes through life without having found a congenial character. A thousand delicate regards to all that affects human duty and happiness in that widely extended sphere, in which such a mind beholds them, operate on the conduct. Steele, without any attempt at generalizing, describes such a character in his *Fidelia*, a young woman of beauty and wealth, who rejects the addresses of numerous lovers and finds her happiness in attendance on an infirm father. Though it is most pleasant to contemplate this intellectual existence in its pure and amiable forms, yet as far as the present subject is concerned it is not

less important and perhaps more frequent, when its moral character is of a different kind. The vast and complicated business of polished society constitutes a distinct sphere of cares, desires, and pursuits, for a considerable part of the higher ranks in the old world, and for those who most resemble those ranks among us. The earnestness with which the great objects of life are pursued; the agonizing tension of the soul under the influence of ambition, of emulation, of jealousy; the efforts of the mind required of them, on whose shoulders the weight of empire rests; the eagerness of gain, the absorption, the distraction of the great interests, to which men are pledged, all these and many things included in them, which we leave to the imagination of our readers to supply, strongly modify the existence of man; and furnish a part of the laws that regulate the multiplication of the race. Mr Malthus has glanced at some of them, under the head of the preventive check arising from moral restraint. But a volume would not suffice to do justice to the practical importance of the theme; and to trace the manner by which the advancement and the cultivation of the life of the reason, of the affections, and of the passions, are made to counterbalance the tendencies of the animal nature. The history of man and contemporary observation would sufficiently establish the soundness of this speculation. They would point to us the extinction of noble and royal families, the magnificent desolation of uninhabited castles, the barren bed of vicious opulence. They would change the scene and show us the action of the same principle under the different form of a mistaken piety, filling the deserts and the provinces with convents and monasteries, where 'the mind received a kind of melancholy culture, and the heart enjoyed an enthusiastic exercise of some of its strongest affections.'\* While finally in private and individual life, we may often trace the unpartnered solitude of the heart among the victims of many of the strong passions, tender scruples, exquisite tastes; and which whether they excite our aversion as gloomy and unsocial, or command our admiration as lofty and purified from the dross of the world, or move our pity at the dreary void of the social affections which they induce, all operate practically to bring into exercise a different law of progress in the increase of man.

\* Buckminster's Female Asylum Sermon.

These reflections will perhaps lead us to adopt with caution the idea that vice and misery alone are the checks on the indefinite increase of our race. We do not know on the other hand by what argument it can be made out, that such an indefinite increase is any part of human perfection. No one, whose assent we are anxious to secure, will deny that the moral and intellectual nature of man is his great glory ; nor doubt that in the cultivation and improvement of this moral and intellectual nature, the original design of our being is to be placed. It is equally true that the multiplication of our species is the result of one specific instinct ;—native, virtuous, powerful ;—but shown by daily observation to be only a part of our natures. There are other principles within us equally native, equally virtuous, in their end more elevated, and so far from being of rare occurrence, that no one can look round upon society about him without witnessing their action and its superiority to the mere law of animal increase.

But we must hasten to draw these remarks to a close, by offering our readers a brief analysis of Mr Everett's work. Having in the first chapter stated the origin of the controversy between Messrs Godwin and Malthus and their respective doctrines as to the effect of political institutions, our author devotes his second chapter to the real effect of the increase of population. From this chapter, we have already made an extract in which the doctrine, we think, is amply established, that the increase of population produces a great increase in the means of subsistence. This is the new view, which Mr Everett has labored to establish, and which forms the basis of the work. It is farther illustrated in the third chapter, by applying it to man in different stages of civilization. One point is so ingeniously and ably urged, that we cannot forbear an extract of the passage.

‘ The amount of labor at the disposal of the society and the skill with which it is applied being thus augmented, in proportion to the increase of population, it is evident that the result must be a great increase of products. The greater or less degree of abundance, as respects the means of subsistence which will result from this increase, will depend upon the physical and political situation of the society, and the greater or less degree in which the several departments of industry are favored by it. It seems to be the opinion of Mr Malthus that as long as there are large tracts of land in a country to be occupied, the increase of popu-

lation is unattended with danger; and that it is only when the soil has been entirely appropriated, while the population still continues to increase, that the danger of scarcity begins to present itself. But in this, as in many other points, the positions of Mr Malthus seem to be directly the reverse of the truth. As long as the principal effect of the increase of population, is to bring under cultivation additional tracts of land, the positive resources and wealth of the society will doubtless be augmented in the same proportion, but the means of subsistence will be neither more nor less abundant than they were before. Let us suppose, for example, that a hundred families obtain an easy and abundant subsistence by cultivating five hundred acres of land. If the number of families be increased to two hundred, and the number of acres under cultivation to a thousand; it is obvious, that the proportion between the demand for the means of subsistence and their supply will not be altered. It is only when the population begins to increase on a territory already appropriated, that it produces the effect of augmenting the supply of provisions in proportion to the demand. In the former case, the supply of labor is augmented, but the skill with which it is applied remains nearly the same as before. In the latter, the skill as well as the number of the laborers is increased; and as the productiveness of labor depends almost wholly upon the skill and science with which it is applied, it is obvious that the products will be infinitely more abundant in the latter case, with the same increase of population, than they were in the former. The increase of population on an unoccupied territory only increases the quantity of rude labor and of its products, but leaves the productiveness of labor and the comparative abundance of its products as before. On a limited territory the same cause introduces the new element of skill, the effects of which, in augmenting the productiveness of labor and the abundance of its products, are unbounded and incalculable.' p. 24—25.

Having thus established the real effect of an increase of population, Mr Everett proceeds to refute the doctrine of Mr Malthus, that there is actually existing throughout the world a permanent scarcity of food, arising from the pressure of population on subsistence, and this he has aimed to do in his third, fourth, and fifth chapters. In these it is shown that Mr Malthus' argument takes for granted that a given population must subsist upon the direct product of the soil they occupy; and secondly, that the rate of increase of the human species, assumed by Mr Malthus as true, being deduced from the single example of the United States, and not from an average of all

the known cases, involves a logical error, and in point of fact is a great deal too high.

The proposition that the increase of population is a principle of abundance and not of scarcity being thus established in a positive way, and cleared of the only objection that can be made to it, it formed no necessary part of Mr Everett's object to ascertain what the rate of increase of the human species really is, and what the causes are that determine the extent of population. But as these are interesting questions, and have generally been discussed in connexion with the main subject, Mr Everett has briefly considered them in the sixth and seventh chapters of his work, where he has shown that the extent of population is determined almost wholly by the degree of civilization; and that its increase is checked at every stage of civilization, by particular forms of moral and physical evil, the operation of which may be indefinitely diminished, but can never be wholly removed, and will always prevent the earth from being overstocked with inhabitants.

This theory is illustrated, in the eighth chapter, by a reference to the example of the United States of America. The unprecedented increase of population, in this country, is attributed by Mr Everett to its extraordinary political and geographical situation, by means of which the inhabitants have been almost wholly exempt from the influence of the checks on population, that have generally existed in communities, at the same point of civilization. In other words, it is attributed to the goodness of the social institutions and the good morals of the people. The abundance of the means of subsistence enjoyed by men is stated to be the consequence and not the cause of their favorable moral and political situation, and this point is illustrated by a reference to the case of the neighboring Indians, whose position is precisely the same in every particular excepting that of civilization, and who, instead of increasing in population and living in abundance, are diminishing in numbers and dying of want.

In the ninth and tenth chapters, Mr Everett has examined the doctrine of Mr Malthus on the propriety of discouraging marriage and abolishing the poor laws, and having already shown the error of the principles from which these inferences were drawn, there is little difficulty of course in reasoning against the inferences themselves. In fact, it is that part of

Mr Malthus' work, where he recommends the abolition of all laws for the systematic relief of the poor, which will soonest awaken scepticism as to the soundness of the system, of which this harsh proposal is a part. It is capable of moral demonstration that poverty is a part, and an important part, of the plan of Providence; that it is a duty to relieve it:—and it is the dictate of reason and common sense that what it is a duty to do at all, it is a duty to do in the most efficient way. To say, with Mr Malthus, that all relief of the poor should be left to casual charity, is to say that this relief ought to be bestowed in the least effectual, the least intelligent, the most wasteful manner. Nor ought any argument against poor laws to be drawn from the monstrous abuses of the English system.

In the eleventh chapter of his work Mr Everett has explained the manner in which the state of civilization affects the rate of wages, and prevents in many cases the rewards of individual labor from increasing in proportion to the increased productiveness of the labor of the community.

Mr Everett has justly remarked of his work, of which we have thus given a faint outline, that it is itself little more than a summary of the principal heads of argument, in a very condensed form. Though it should appear that his leading view, viz. that the increase of population is a principle not of scarcity but of abundance, is not absolutely new, it is plainly original with its author, and is developed with greater precision, we imagine, than it has ever before been. The writer of this notice abstains from bestowing any compliments on the work, which would come from too partial a source to be of weight. But he trusts he shall not overstep the limits of propriety, in recommending the essay of Mr Everett as a happy specimen of original and profound thinking, clothed in chaste and simple language. Whether it will produce an extensive effect on the public mind, with regard to the great question which it treats, must be left for time to decide.

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ART. XV.—*Beobachtungen auf einer Reise nach England, &c.*

*Observations on a Journey to England, with Recollections of memorable Occurrences and Contemporaries, during the last*